

Berlin Wall, few envisioned the "Velvet Divorce" between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in 1993. It was a tribute to the peoples of both sovereign nations that the split was non-violent, a sharp contrast to the violence which accompanied transition in a number of other post-communist societies in Europe.

I had the honor of sitting down with Vaclav Havel when I accompanied President Clinton to the NATO Madrid Summit in July of 1997 when the Alliance invited the Czech Republic, along with Hungary and Poland to apply for membership. We reflected on the changes that had transpired in this society, a subject which lends itself to further discussion on this tenth anniversary as well.

Inevitably, some of the idealism of those heady days of ten years ago has dissipated, as Czechs and Slovaks grapple with the day to day challenges of a democracy and a free market. After opting for separation, the Slovaks chose a repressive leader, Vladimir Meciar, who promptly took the fledgling nation on a u-turn away from democratic pluralism and economic reform.

Nonetheless, the Slovaks changed direction again and are back on a positive course. Relations between the neighboring Czechs and Slovaks have also markedly improved in recent months. In this sequence of events, I believe there are lessons to be learned. With freedom comes the ability to make good and bad choices—and bad decisions will be made time to time in any democracy. It is nonetheless eminently preferable to having decisions forced on a populace by a discredited, installed regime.

What the vibrant Czech and Slovak communities in the United States remind us each day is never to take our freedom for granted because it can be taken away or it can deteriorate into a unrecognizable state. They help us understand the pain that their friends, relatives, and brethren endured when they lost this gift. And they help us recall the remarkable achievement the Czech and Slovak people accomplished together during a remarkable month, one decade ago.

HONORING BRANDI DIAS

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a very brave young woman, Brandi Dias. Ms. Dias suffers from acute myeloid leukemia and recently had a stem cell transplant, using her own marrow to fight the cancer. I am happy to say that she is doing well.

After her own experience with trying unsuccessfully to find a bone marrow donor match, Brandi became interested in attracting volunteers to the National Marrow Donor Program. The National Marrow Donor Program facilitates transplants from volunteers and unrelated donors for patients of all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Brandi has focused on attracting and retaining volunteers to participate in the NMDP Registry, where people can search for matching donors.

Believing that donors are more likely to remain committed to the program if they participate in a thorough education program prior to joining the NMDP Registry, Brandi submitted a proposal for a pilot program that will include two-hour seminars covering the process of becoming a bone marrow donor.

I am proud to say that Brandi has received word that her Bone Marrow Donor Pilot Program proposal has been funded. The funding will allow for a donor pilot program in San Luis Obispo County and for four donor drives beginning in January 2000. The goal of this pilot program is to encourage and educate the public about the need for bone marrow donors and to assist in retaining donors on the registry.

And so I salute Brandi Dias today. She has shown courage in her fight against leukemia and transformed this experience into community activism that will benefit patients across San Luis Obispo County. I am proud to represent her in Congress.

RECOGNITING OF A VISIT BY A RUSSIAN DELEGATION TO THE THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DIS- TRICT OF WISCONSIN

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks I have read many news articles and heard many interviews which paint a very grim picture of the political and financial situation in Russia. I have seen economic analysts and political pundits shake their heads and ask in very solemn tones, "Who lost Russia?" If I were to believe the most outspoken American leaders and experts, it seems we should just give up on democratic development in Russia and allow the worst-case scenarios to become self-fulfilling prophecies.

But while gloomy forecasts cloud this country's media-based perception of Russia's future, I have good reason to hold out hope for a prosperous Russia and for a strong U.S.-Russian relationship. In September, I hosted a delegation of Russians through the auspices of the Library of Congress and the American Foreign Policy Council. After spending an exceptionally enlightening week with these individuals, I believe the real question facing the West is not who lost Russia—as if it were the West's to lose—or even whether Russia is lost. Rather, the question is how can we help enterprising and industrious Russians, like those I met, work to rebuild their nation.

The delegation that spent a week in my Congressional district in western Wisconsin came from different regions of Russia and different walks of life. As politicians, scientists and financial advisors, these men and women represented their nation well. They looked around a typical Wisconsin dairy farm, walked in a small town parade, toured a state university campus and strolled along the banks of the Mississippi River. All the while they shared with me, with my constituents and with each other, their thoughts about their homeland, its future, and the future of relations between our

countries. I was struck by the energy and optimism of these individuals, and by their sincere desire to see their fledgling democracy flourish.

Mr. Sergey Alksandrovich Klimov is the deputy head of the Votorynets district administration in Nizhney-Novgorod Oblast. Ms. Irina Lovovna Osokina is a deputy of the Moscow City Duma. Mr. Nikolay Mikhaylovich Tarasov is the Mayor of Orsk in the Orenburgh Oblast and a member of the legislative assembly. Mr. Dmitry Valeriyevich Udalov is chairman of the board of the agricultural finance company Russkoye Pole, and deputy of the Saratov regional Duma. Each of these individuals has specific reasons for participating in the delegation to my district, and each had specific interests in comparing the institutions, business ventures and political processes of our two nations. But by the end of their stay, each grew to be friends with the others, as well as with me and my staff, and our shared goals for peace and prosperity outweighed the differences between our respective ways of life.

On their way home, the delegation stopped here in Washington. They were not only impressed by our magnificent capital city, but by the fact that the American people have such direct and open access to their elected leaders and their government. I am glad to say that through this exchange program, myself and many other Members of Congress were able to open this Capitol—the People's House—to our World War II allies as a sign of support for their honorable efforts at home.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of Soviet Communism in Russia, the Russian people have strived to reap the fruits of democracy and capitalism. Many in Russia feel that the journey is hopeless and that capitalism will not work for them. I am confident that, based on the four outstanding people I had the honor of hosting, the doubters and naysayers both in Russia and abroad will be proven wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that we have a duty, not only as legislators, but as Americans and as citizens of the world, to help our Russian friends at this critical time in their history. Let us extend a hand both in friendship and assistance. Mortimer B. Zuckerman, Editor-in-Chief of U.S. News & World Report recently wrote: "Russia is not lost. It is still a much better friend of the West than it was under Communism." Mr. Zuckerman went on to say, "The Russians have, in fact, demonstrated an extraordinary resilience . . . The United States and the West will have to appreciate that Russia can only solve its problems its own way." He concluded, "Humility will serve us well. Not everybody needs to be like us." I couldn't agree more. Russia does have a bright future, and the United States has the opportunity to be a friend and partner in that future.

We will, of course, continue to encourage democracy and openness not only in Russia, but in all nations of the world. In the aftermath of the Cold War, such participation remains vital to our national interest. America must be active in the world community to help guide the many newly independent nations in their democratic development.

Mr. Speaker, I made new friends in September; friends I hope learned at least a little

from me and my community, as I learned so much from them. Perhaps the greatest thing I learned is how similar are our goals and dreams for our countries, our communities, and our families. I applaud the members of the Russian delegation that visited my district for their dedication and loyalty to their nation, and I wish them well in their efforts to build stronger communities and homes for their families.

FEDERAL WILDLIFE AID

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, this legislative session, the House Resources Committee, of which I am a member, held three lengthy hearings on how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has managed the Pittman-Robertson (PR) and Dingell-Johnson (DJ) funds. These funds are paid for through excise taxes collected on all fishing and hunting supplies and outdoor gear. Coloradans pay a disproportionate share of these taxes because of the number of sportsmen and women who live here. In addition, businesses in Colorado collect a large share of the taxes for the federal government because visitors come from all over and spend money to hunt and fish in our great state.

The Fish and Wildlife Service was instructed to distribute the PR-DJ money through the Federal Aid Program to the states to use for conservation and wildlife management. Coloradans pay these taxes without complaint because they are playing a part in improving wildlife and conservation in our state. This fund has helped target money to recover species in Colorado that would have otherwise been endangered without PR-DJ funds. The problem comes when Fish and Wildlife was allowed to use up to 6 percent of one fund and 8 percent of the other to cover administrative costs related to distributing money to the states. Whatever Fish and Wildlife did not use at the end of the year is supposed to go back to the states for more recovery programs.

In the hearings, we heard from the General Accounting Office (GAO), a non-partisan federal auditing agency that the Federal Aid Program within Fish and Wildlife is "one of the worst managed programs we've ever encountered." Fish and Wildlife has been caught red-handed spending funds Congress specifically designated to support conservation and wildlife management. We learned from GAO that rather than returning money to the States, over \$30 million was spent on trips to Japan, expensive hotels and dinners, and other unauthorized expenses. They had at least separate slush funds within Fish and Wildlife used for pet projects never approved by Congress. In fact, some of these projects were specifically forbidden. Money was spent on "International Affairs, the Peoples Republic of China," "International Affairs, NAFTA," and other mysterious items unrelated to conservation. When the committee asked, Assistant Interior Secretary Donald Barry, and Director of Fish and Wildlife Service Jamie Clark could not provide

an explanation on how this money was helping with conservation and wildlife management in the United States.

We learned that money was also used to fund bonuses for employees who weren't even working for Fish and Wildlife, and, in some cases, to people who weren't even working for the federal government. In addition, employees who have no authority were signing off travel well above the federal limits, on trips in excess of \$75,000. Believe it or not, it gets worse. They tried to use these administrative funds, meant to pay a phone bill or buy a desk, to buy an island near Hawaii. The cost of this remote island was \$30 million. Fish and Wildlife said it was important to ducks that the Island be preserved. When Congress looked into the island further we found a total of 10 ducks on the Island.

Unfortunately, this is just one program in one agency within the Department of Interior, and there are still several million dollars within Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson and Fish and Wildlife no one seems to know where it was spent. At the final hearing, I asked for the resignation of Ms. Clark and Mr. Barry if they could not find out where this money was going and stop the waste and illegal spending. Rather than spending \$3 million per duck in a remote Island, Fish and Wildlife Service should let the people of Colorado use this money toward something that actually helps conservation and wildlife.

TRIBUTE TO LORRAINE CLAIR

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Lorraine Clair, of Delta, OH. Lorraine passed from this life on October 12, 1999. Lorraine had been an elected official in Fulton County, Ohio since 1983, serving first on the village council, then as Vice Mayor, and was elected Mayor beginning in 1986 through her retirement in 1998.

Lorraine Clair graduated from Liberty Center High School in 1959, went on to study cosmetology at the Toledo Academy of Beauty Culture, and worked as a beautician for many years, eventually leaving her profession to be a wife and mother. Tapped to run for Delta Village Council in 1983, Lorraine entered the political area, a career she clearly enjoyed. As her daughter noted, "After she was named Vice Mayor and then became the Mayor, she just ran from there." At many Fulton County events, Mayor Clair could be found trying to meet with everyone in the room, charming and gracious, chatting amiably or discussing farming, business, families, or issues of the day with ease.

Delta grew and prospered throughout Lorraine's tenure as Mayor. Under her administration a wastewater treatment plant was built, streets were resurfaced and rebuilt, three new housing subdivisions were built, and the village park was developed, including a new shelterhouse. She led the local effort to bring new industry to Delta, which now features two steel mills and the industries which contribute

to the mills. Before she had to retire due to declining health, Mayor Clair had begun planning for a new 50,000 gallon water tower. Lorraine's drive as Mayor was summed up by her successor who stated, "She cared quite a bit about the community and the overall quality of life. She was particularly concerned with youth activities and about things for our seniors to do." This summation is an honorable legacy for a woman who remained a lifelong resident of Fulton County, rising to lead one of its communities, and working with fellow elected officials to keep the county a viable community.

In addition to her public legacy, Lorraine Clair leaves an even greater personal one: her children Kirk, Michelle, and Melissa and six grandchildren. We express our heartfelt condolences to them, to her mother Rennetta, brothers Calvin and Tim, and sisters Lorrinda and Leann, and leave them with these words from poet Haydn Marshall, "... for every joy that passes something beautiful remains."

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF BEN RICHMOND ON HIS SELECTION AS FEATURED ARTIST FOR THE STATE OF OHIO BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding individual from the Fifth Congressional District of Ohio. We are fortunate that Ben Richmond makes his home in our area and is able to share his artistic talents with us.

Ben Richmond is without question one of Ohio's premier artists. Concentrating on the rich heritage and natural surroundings of the Great Lakes, Ben Richmond seeks to combine feeling, personality, and clear relationships in each of his paintings. While his paintings and artistic creations are produced in wondrous fashion today, in his youth, art class was not at the top of Ben's priority list. However, with some guidance from his parents and one of his college professors, Ben embarked upon a remarkable career as an artist.

Mr. Speaker, after honing his skills as an artist, Ben graduated from college and went to work in the business world. But, business simply did not capture Ben's imagination and talents the way painting did. So, one weekend, while traveling through Marblehead with his wife, Wendy, they noticed the picturesque beauty of the Lake Erie region. In 1981, the Richmonds purchased a building in the village of Marblehead and turned it into an art gallery. Thus began the artistry of Ben Richmond.

Ben Richmond's myriad collection of works of art seems to have no end. From his signature painting of the Marblehead Lighthouse to the other limited edition paintings, posters, sculptures, and collectibles, the Richmond Galleries has become known as The Collectors Choice for custom artwork and framing. For his accomplishments, Ben Richmond's work has been featured at the Grand Central